

*Good Governance for improving service delivery
and administrative efficiency*

The Janmitra Experience

Jan Mitra Samadhan Kendra

Abstract:

Delivering dedicated public services to citizens in rural areas in an effective and responsive manner has always been a formidable challenge for the administration. Janmitra, in its quintessence attempts at responding to this existential challenge through three fold innovations that address substantive issues in effective programme management and field level implementation. The essence of Janmitra lies in an appropriate blending of technology with human skills to provide a basket of G2 C services in a time bound, decentralized and citizen friendly manner and at monitoring the on field presence of field level functionaries with a view to improving public service delivery in crucial sectors of public importance.

The success of this experiment lies, not in its technological sophistication per se nor even in the novelty of the idea, but essentially in an implementable, eminently practicable and intelligent blending of contextually appropriate technology and human skills with exemplary leadership. A total of 72 services are being currently provided through 47 Gram Panchayat offices refashioned as Janmitra centres as the field is abuzz with activity of field level functionaries of 13 different departments in the district who are regularly registering their on-field presence at the centres using biometric fingerprint identification technology. Proportionate salary cuts are being affected in cases of below the threshold level attendance. MIS data entry under the MNREGS has been decentralized to the Panchayat cluster level through these centres.

Over 50,000 applications have been received so far at these 47 centres in the as the rate of disposal continues to be above 95%. This essentially means that in any given day, 95% of the total applications received since the commencement of the project at these 47 centres have been successfully processed while the remaining are being processed strictly within the designated time limits. A detailed impact assessment study conducted by Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIITM), Gwalior

has revealed that the demand load on district offices has dropped down considerably since the commencement of this project. The study further comments that the project is not only effective in terms of impact it has had on the routines, propensities and attitudes of ‘bottom of the pyramid’ staff, a good level of transparency has been maintained in the delivery of services and the corruption levels as perceived by the users are appreciably low. It adds that in the long term, initiatives like this are eminently sustainable; financially, institutionally and operationally provided that the monitoring and evaluation continues to be as constructive as it has been so far. Such is the rush of activity at the Janmitra centre in a village that citizens in rural Gwalior now call it the ‘Mini Collectorate’.

Details of the impact in terms of reduction in the costs, number of trips, distance travelled etc for a user has been brought out cogently in the impact assessment study conducted by IIITM. Quantitative tools have been used in the study to present the impact of biometric technology based attendance monitoring systems over a geographically dispersed territorial area with a diverse and eclectic field staff, which is quite unlike the scenario in a conventional office space, where such attendance systems are most routinely used. Contrary to initial apprehensions, the attendance monitoring module in Janmitra is yielding encouraging results – the perceived field presence of participating departments has improved appreciably.

While the use of ICT is emphasized in Janmitra, it has been adjuncted with human interventions to prevent technology pitfalls. The innovations sought to be implemented through JANMITRA are novel, experience based and grounded in field realities.

So far (by 24th July) in all the Janmitra Samadhan Kendras we have received a total of 84222 applications and out of them 81424 applications(95%) have been already disposed.

Introduction:

Expeditious delivery of G2C services, in terms of regularity, accessibility, availability and efficacy, to the rural poor has always been a challenge for district administration in India. An average rural Indian has a simple set of expectations from the government –that its field level functionaries responsible for service delivery in different sectors perform their duties expeditiously and efficiently; secondly that his access to the administration for the myriad dimensions in which administration impinges upon the life of an ordinary citizen is a reasonable and convenient experience.

Notwithstanding this simple proposition, one often finds that an ordinary citizen in rural area suffers on both counts. It is common knowledge that the service delivery standards at the field level – in terms of regularity ,availability and accessibility of services are abysmally low, unfortunately so in crucial social sectors like health and education . Despite efforts aimed at democratic decentralization, a vast array of basic G2C services – say demand for installation of a hand pump in a village can be availed of only at the district headquarters. This means that people from remote, rural villages have to travel anywhere up to 50 kms for a service as basic as obtaining a ration card. Since a majority of the rural poor are engaged in farm labor or work as daily wage earners, a single trip to the district headquarters entails a day's wages or work on the fields as the opportunity cost. Service delivery is still not assured. One often has to undertake several such trips before a simple task- say obtaining the copy of record-of-rights, the basic land record document, is accomplished.

Further, inadequacy of monitoring mechanisms makes it difficult for the Collector to ensure the on field availability of key field level functionaries. All he depends on are his field visits and surprise inspections which too cannot be very frequent and numerous owing to the nature of his engagements. Field staff in vital social sectors like health and education- say an auxiliary nurse and midwife (ANM) working in a remote sub health centre or a primary school teacher posted at a remote hamlet would often remain absent

for long periods from their workplaces and district heads would not have any monitoring mechanisms to check such truancy on the part of field level functionaries.

Such absence would essentially have a deleterious impact on the service delivery efficacy of vital line departments. Serious flaws in service delivery at the field would in turn compel the rural poor, who are hit the hardest by the same, to throng district offices for grievance remediation. Thus the demand load from rural citizens would be highest on the top of the hierarchy, i.e. at the district headquarters while lower down, enforcing accountability for performance would become a difficult task in the absence of rigorous and intelligent monitoring mechanisms. Essentially, the interests of the rural poor are most seriously affected by this state of affairs and in general, administrative machinery is perceived as quite rigid; difficult, costly and time consuming in terms of access .Poor on field presence of field staff is a serious cause of concern, particularly so, in crucial sectors like education apart from being a monumental grievance for the rural citizens.

Janmitra was conceptualized, designed and implemented in this background, as a localized innovation in administration with the aim of placing citizen at the focal point of governance.

JANMITRA – AN OVERVIEW

Experience in implementing myriads government programmes, monitoring the performance of departments in different capacities and having extensively interacted with citizens in the context of their problems ,especially in rural areas ,Collector Gwalior Mr. Akash Tripathi had been able to abstract certain salient issues ,which if remedied would go a long way in alleviating the typical quandaries associated with rural life. These issues, though apparently quotidian are seen to lie at the bedrock of effective programme administration and governance in rural areas and these challenges primarily are :-

- Re-engineering G2C service delivery process , which in turn would
 - Decentralize governmental interface
 - Alleviate service demand load on higher levels
 - Bring administration closer to citizens

- Monitoring and Evaluation of the on-field presence of field level functionaries, which would
 - Ensure increased on-field presence and hence activity of the field staff

With these objective in view, Collector Gwalior conceived of JANMITRA as the vehicle to test and execute three fold innovations .

INNOVATIONS INVOLVED

1. Innovations in monitoring of field level functionaries :- This being the substantive innovation in JANMITRA, it was envisaged that field level functionaries of all executive departments at the district level would be required to register their daily / periodical attendance at the Panchayat offices falling within their territorial jurisdiction .Hence a fool proof attendance monitoring system devised on a technology platform that does away with the predictable fallacies and loopholes inherent in a manual attendance monitoring system was required. Daily/periodical attendance recording would be coupled with generation of weekly reports (arranged department-wise and centre-wise) which would be available to respective department heads so that action could be taken against employees found to be irregular or absent from the place of their duty on the working days in a given period.

Hence, the core issue that JANMITRA seeks to address is ensuring regularity and timeliness of rural services which would be achieved when field level functionaries visit their 'field' daily or in accordance with their attendance plan and officials at every successive level up also visit these areas with a regular periodicity .For instance, an ANM in-charge of a sub center in a far off village resides in the city and consequently remains absent for prolonged intervals from the center; Janmitra attendance monitoring system would ensure that she comes to her center daily and gives her attendance at the nearest Janmitra Kendra lest her salary should be cut for unauthorized absence. In a nutshell, while such attendance monitoring systems that are regularly deployed in offices and commercial establishments have so far monitored attendance of fixed number of employees over a closed and fixed space, Janmitra would for the first time replicate the model for a large number of diverse, independent field functionaries of several

departments spread over a large area and in an essentially rural ambience. It would further compile the attendance database so generated so as to be of utility for the performance appraisal systems of their respective departments.

2. Innovations in decentralization: - The utility and significance of public service delivery would be enhanced manifold, if an improvised center with a much expanded basket of services could be envisaged at the sectoral level. This would mean that the opportunity cost involved in leaving the village for a day to visit the district headquarters based Samadhan Kendra (in form of loss of day's wages for laborers etc.) would be obviated as the Janmitra Kendra would now function in the nearest Panchayat office. Apart from the one - day services that the Samadhan Center provides, there are a slew of other services which are extremely crucial for villagers in rural areas and could be included in a comprehensive service delivery package.

3. Innovations in NREGA data entry: - Apart from service delivery, another major task identified for decentralization was the voluminous data entry work under MNREGS. The task of data entry into MIS hitherto carried out at the block level was indeed herculean, involving extensive paperwork and investment of time and human resource. This task would be considerably simplified if only the point of collection of data could be shifted away from the block centre and located closer to the point where data is generated in the first place i.e. at the Gram Panchayat level. This decentralized data entry would be the first of its kind ever attempted in the country. NREGS data entered at the Janmitra centers spread across the block would be merged at the block level and transmitted upwards, thereby simplifying the collection, compilation and flow of data.

With this foundational idea, Collector Gwalior formed a team of officials to chalk out a programme design in detail and a plan for its implementation while coordinating between the various departments in the process. Collector also identified 12 Gram Panchayat offices in the Barai block to house the pilot Janmitra centres. Each Centre would cater to 4-6 contiguous Gram Panchayats. These 12 centres in the Barai block were envisaged to

pilot the Jan Mitra project. In the month of April, 2010 this project was scaled up to cover the entire district and 47 such centres have now come up across the four development blocks in Gwalior.

Issues before the project team: -

The key issues before the project team were:-

- 1** In the **attendance monitoring module**, identification of key field level posts in each department and the periodicity with which their attendance would be recorded. This would include posts right from the grass root level village workers to the district level officers with field responsibilities.
- 2** In the **service delivery module**, identification of service which can be conveniently delivered at the Gram Panchayat level .The key criteria in determining this was whether the service delivery in a given case is vested with the field level functionaries visiting the center for attendance. All services which are to be provided/ verified /approved /sanctioned by or through the field level functionaries visiting a given center for attendance would have to be included in the service delivery module. This would include one day services as well as services to be delivered within a specified time limit.

3 Infrastructure and Technology Options

- (I) Evaluating technology options for attendance monitoring, development of interfacing software and database creation.
- (II) Devising a power solution for the center as the areas where the centers were to be set up get a mere 5-6 hours of supply at night through the rural feeder while they would be required to operate for at least 8 hours every day.
- (III) Devising a framework for service delivery module followed by software development including therein; time limits within which service delivery would be assured for each service. It was decided to compress the time limits (as provided in citizen charters) for each service as localized service delivery was bound to be faster. Legal issues related to delegation of powers for some services (e.g. issue of

copies of BI Khatauni, filing of affidavits etc) to the center operators would also need to be looked at.

- (IV) While decentralized data entry below the block level was to be attempted for the first time, its integration with existing nationwide NREGS database would involve operationalizing its sub-block module for the first time.
- (V) Physical infrastructure up gradation at the existing Gram Panchayat offices would have to be undertaken.
- (VI) Networking of the 12 centres inter-se and broadband links to the block and district headquarters.

The Implementation Process:

While the concept, basic programme design and leadership in implementation were provided by the Collector Gwalior, every stage in the execution process, from design to implementation involved extensive and multi layered consultations with eclectic stakeholders who contributed immensely to the successful execution of the project. The most important role in the identification of services to be delivered at the centres was played by Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) namely the Gram Panchayats.

Proposals were drafted by each of the 59 Gram Panchayats in development block Barai recommending a cluster of services central to the requirements of the village dwellers. These proposals were duly sorted and processed department wise at the level of District Panchayat and eventually, the Collector who has been the prime mover of the project gave a final shape to the consolidated proposals. The Collector also co-ordinated with the 13 participating line departments at the district level, guiding them through analysis and re-engineering of their service delivery processes and in the preparation of their departmental attendance rosters.

The department heads played a pivotal role, in not only liaising with the district administration for the necessary groundwork in a constructive manner but more so, in leading at their respective levels, the initiative to re-engineer processes that were detrimental to expeditious delivery of services and in motivating the field level functionaries to accept, own and run the proposed system.

The IEC campaigns as well as training for the programme were conducted in active collaboration with the local NGOs and media. IEC campaign was primarily aimed at informing inhabitants of remote villages of the wide array of services they could avail of at the centers.

Local media, both electronic as well as print, played a pivotal role in informing the public about the initiative. HCL Infosystems Limited supplied hardware solutions for the centres which the entire software design, development and interfacing was done in house by National Informatics Centre, Gwalior. The task of MIS data entry was outsourced to a private agency that meticulously selected and trained qualified local youth as computer operators for the centers. Physical infrastructure up gradation of the Gram Panchayat offices as Janmitra centers was wholly delegated to Panchayats which executed the task efficiently with local people's active participation.

The core strategy adopted by the project team that included the Collector as the head, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Panchayat and other departmental heads was that of extensive, participative and multi-stakeholder based consultations at the project design stage in a bottom to up stream. While the process of services selection was wholly executed by the PRIs so as to be effective and reflective of the real needs of the rural poor, the team worked cohesively in doing detailed analyses of service delivery processes and in re-engineering them so as to make service delivery faster, easier, more economical and more local.

Suggestions of field level staff themselves were most useful in delineating the re-engineered processes. In the framework that emerged, every employee involved in the authoritative disbursement of each of the initially identified 52 services had an attendance schedule fixed up in the Janmitra centres falling within her/his territorial jurisdiction. Such detailed attendance rosters were prepared for each employee in each department for each of the 12 centres. Throughout the process, open channels of communication across the hierarchies facilitated emergence of realistic and highly effective solutions that were thoroughly rooted in field experience.

Once the design had been finalized, the task of software design and development was taken up by National Informatics Centre, Gwalior. With Biometric Fingerprint Identification Technology as the platform, fingerprint templates of all the employees

were generated, stored and locked to preclude the possibility of tampering with fingerprint data. Open competitive tender route was adopted for the procurement of system hardware. Finally, intensive capacity building exercises were designed and executed to train computer operators, employees, center supervisors as well as field staff.

Solutions:-

The biggest challenge before the team led by the Collector was to coordinate the activities of a large number of departments and to get all of them to come to a common platform through JANMITRA. The modus operandi adopted by the team was holding periodic meetings with head of departments to coordinate operations, to resolve intra departmental or inter departmental problems that emerged in the process and to keep within the time limits.

Service delivery module: - A total of 52 services were identified initially after extensive consultations with departmental heads. As stated earlier, services were so chosen that for each service the field level functionary operating in the Gram Panchayat area was involved authoritatively. A number of these services were in the nature of demands- like, demand for NREGS work, for old age pension, for a BPL Card etc which was envisaged to significantly unburden the demand load on higher levels of the administrative hierarchy while at the same time ensuring that demand emanating in a local area is catered to expeditiously through localized interventions. The number of services has now gone up to 72 since the commencement of the project. 19 more services have been added to the benefit of rural citizens at large. A list of 72 services delivered at the Jan Mitra Centre is given in Annexure I.

Attendance monitoring module:-

A detailed plan for the purpose of attendance monitoring was created, laying down center wise, details of functionaries required to attend each center and the periodicity of their attendance was also fixed. As it turned out, an average of 50 functionaries were to give their attendance each day at each center during the center working hours i.e. 10:30 – 5:30. For teachers and medical staff, this was made twice a day. The powers to sell judicial stamps up to Rs. 5000 (required in affidavits etc) and non judicial revenue stamps (required in copies of B1 etc) were also devolved to the PCOs in charge of the Janmitra Centres. Further, the powers of renewal of arms licenses were devolved to the Executive Magistrates for all centres falling within their areas.

Technical Solutions

As far as technical solutions are concerned, the following decisions were taken –

1. Biometric finger print identification system was chosen as the technology solution for attendance monitoring module. While procurement of hardware was done separately, NIC Gwalior developed interfacing software for the module with inbuilt summary report generation functions. Database creation (i.e., fingerprint template generation) was undertaken centrally at district headquarters and locked thereafter to preclude the possibility of tampering with finger print data.
2. Software for service delivery module was also developed in house by NIC Gwalior. Software for sub block level data entry and merger at the block level was procured from NIC Delhi for integration with other Janmitra software.
3. The task of manning the Janmitra centres was outsourced to a private agency which employed trained computer professionals to man the centres.
4. Certificate formats under different services (Income Certificate, Birth & Death Certificate etc) were fed into the software database and land records database as well as the software was integrated the Janmitra software.
5. While broadband connectivity was installed at 8 Janmitra Centres, the remaining four were installed with NIC data cards for real time data transmission to begin with. Sine wave inverters with parallel D.C batteries were purchased to provide an 8 hrs power back up solution for the JAN MITRA centers. Physical infrastructure up

gradation was undertaken in a mission mode at all the Gram Panchayat offices. The project has now been upgraded to cover all the four blocks in the district and 47 such centres have now been established. After the successful pilot at Barai, hardware, software and skill providers were brought together again for replication of the system in the three blocks and the system is now running successfully across the district.

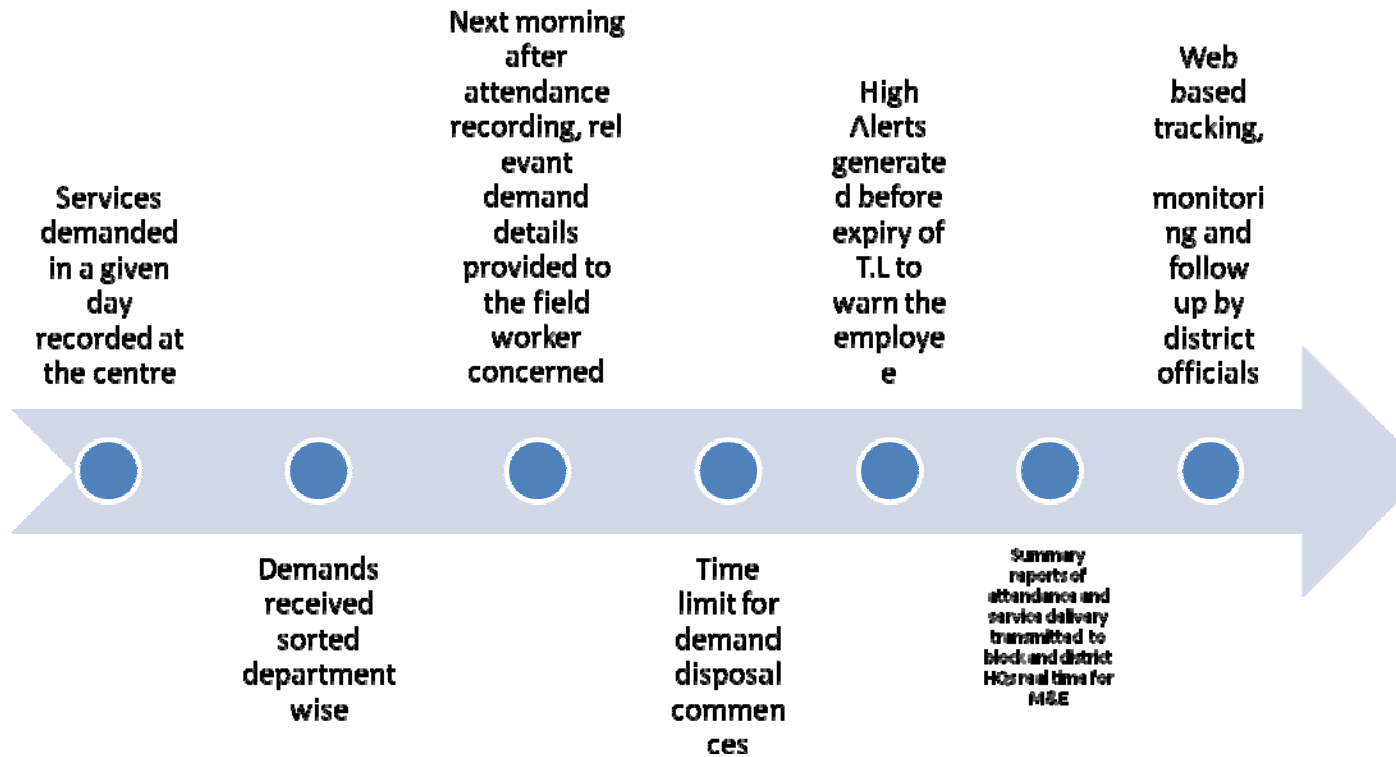
JANMITRA – the delivery matrix

The 72 services to be delivered through these 47 centres have been arranged department wise. Services demanded/ applications received each day in a given center are recorded department-wise by the software. The next morning after recording his attendance, the concerned departmental field worker is provided the list of demands received in the preceding day and the time limit for each demand commences automatically.

The onus of delivering each service as demanded within the time limits clearly set out for the purpose is on the concerned departmental worker. Service is said to have delivered only when the departmental worker returns to the center with the receipt bearing Janmitra's seal (to be given by the centre coordinator to every applicant at the time of receiving her/his application). This facilitates effective compliance and checks negligence in the discharge of duties as till the last minute information regarding demands received and services delivered is available real time every day. The status of pendency of applications in any department can be checked at any time for a give center or for the block/ district as a whole.

A web based online module has also been launched for the system such that apart from the general information about the project, the status of pendency of applications, disposals, number of alerts and defaulters can be had at any time by accessing the project's website. The system of users' login enables the Collector, departmental heads, CEO, ZP and other district officers within the Janmitra framework to peruse the status of attendance/service delivery in their departments. Customized functions that generate reports- department-wise, centre-wise, time-limit wise for the service delivery as well as the attendance monitoring modules have been built in with this application.

Further, summary reports from the attendance monitoring module as well as the service delivery module along with NREGS data are compiled periodically at the block level and transmitted to the district level monitoring cell led by the Collector for monitoring and evaluation purposes.



Capacity building:

Technology per se, cannot yield results unless adjuncted with trained human resource to apply it purposefully. In numerous instances, system failures in innovative projects have occurred simply on account of mismatches between the technology option chosen and the capabilities of human resource employed to execute it. Accordingly special impetus has been given to capacity building of operators and employees at all levels.

Orientation workshops have been organized to introduce and explain the process re-engineering involved in JANMITRA to the field level functionaries of different departments. This has been followed by debriefing sessions in which field staff has come up with several suggestions, some of them have been implemented for the purpose of improvisation. Computer operators have been given extensive training in the software developed by NIC. The training of Janmitra Centre coordinators was indeed very crucial. They were trained not only in the technical and procedural issues involved in Janmitra but also in legal matters incidental to it so that they understand the processes involved in the delivery of each service as well in the monitoring of attendance using biometric devices.

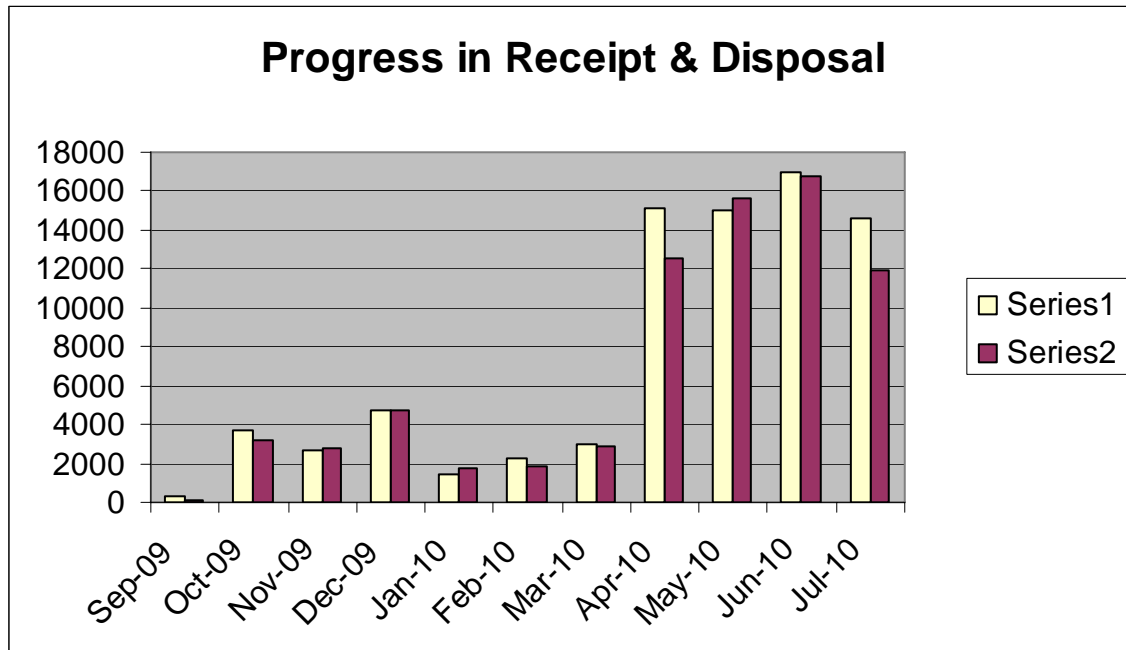
IEC Activities

The success of any project of this nature would depend a great deal on its utility being effectively communicated to the rural people. To generate awareness about the scope and utility of Janmitra services, a 20 minute long film was developed and screened across villages in the block in a week long IEC campaign in Barai. With its popularity soaring, several media organizations and NGOs too have independently followed the project and these films too have been used for the purpose of IEC. Special awareness building and training sessions have been held for people's representatives in local bodies so that they play a constructive role in awareness building about the project. Pamphlets, Wall Paintings and banners have put up at public places in the villages highlighting the services that could be availed of through Janmitra Centers.

Progress:

The Janmitra pilot was kick started in the first week of June with intensive re-engineering exercises, software development by NIC, Gwalior and infrastructure upgrading in the 12 centres in Barai. The pilot eventually commenced operations on the 25th of September, 2009 at the centre situated in Gram Panchayat, Simariya Tanka. The enormous response received has clearly encouraged district administration which has now scaled up the pilot to cover the remaining three blocks in the district as popular demand to start the service in the rest of the district escalated. 35 new centres were inaugurated in the district on the 7th of April, 2010 thereby taking the total count of Janmitra centres to 47. The figure

below gives the progress in receipt and disposal of applications since the operationalization of the centres.

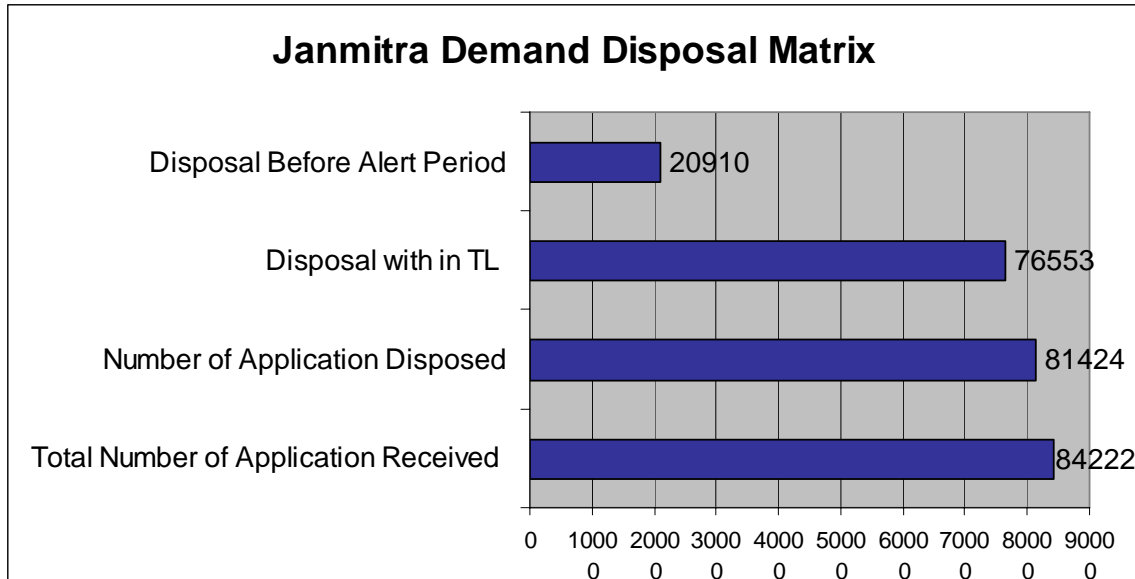


As on May 20th; 46,450 applications have been received from these centres. In the past two months since the scaling up, the daily application inflow has averaged 1061 while the daily disposals have averaged 1134. Disposal rate, thus has been above 95% since the commencement. The attendance linked cuts have become fewer as the number of defaulting employees are decreasing with increased monitoring and evaluation by the district authorities. The attendance plan is working remarkably well as salary cuts are being effected to the extent of –

: Half day's salary for every four and more hours of delay in reporting at the centre;

: Full day's salary for absence.

The figure below shows the status of disposals, alerts and time limits as on 24th July,2010.

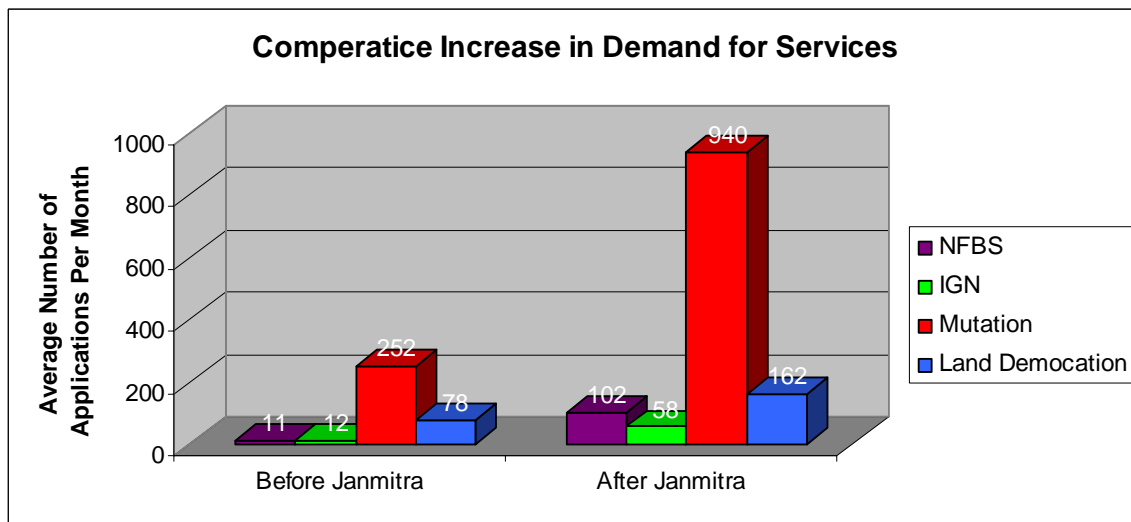
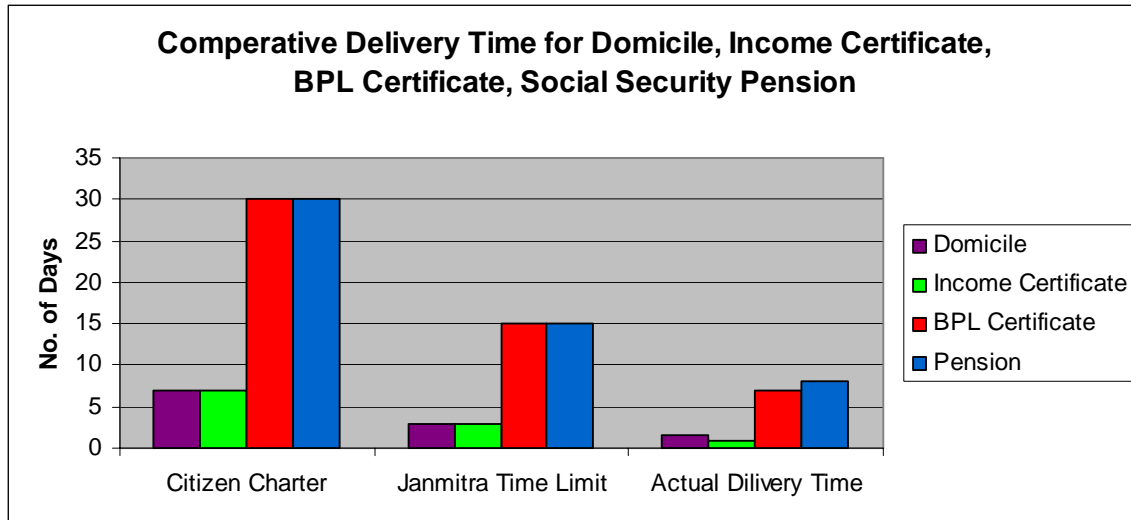


As applications pour in, a self sustaining revenue model has now been introduced by charging a nominal fee with each application. The revenue generated provides for recurring expenditure like stationery at these centres.

The most remarkable feature of Janmitra has so far been that services are being delivered essentially within the time limits which have on purpose been compressed against those provided in relevant Citizen Charters. Further, timely action against defaults in attendance has significantly improved the on field availability of departmental functionaries.

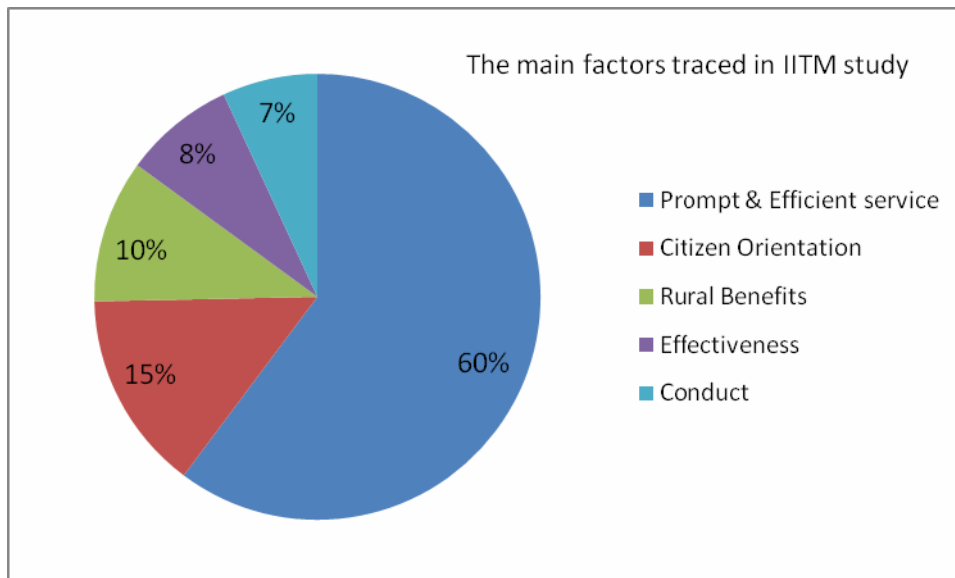
Impact :

An important fact that needs mention here is that time limits have been assigned for the delivery of each service and these limits have been compressed to as much as 50 % as against those provided in the relevant departmental Citizen Charters. High rate of disposal is doable even with these reworked time limits as decentralized service delivery and reengineered processes have remarkably cut down the number of levels up and down the hierarchy that an application has to ordinarily move in a business as usual scenario. The following items show the drastic compression that we have been able to achieve through these centres in terms of the delivery time for the most popular services under the project.

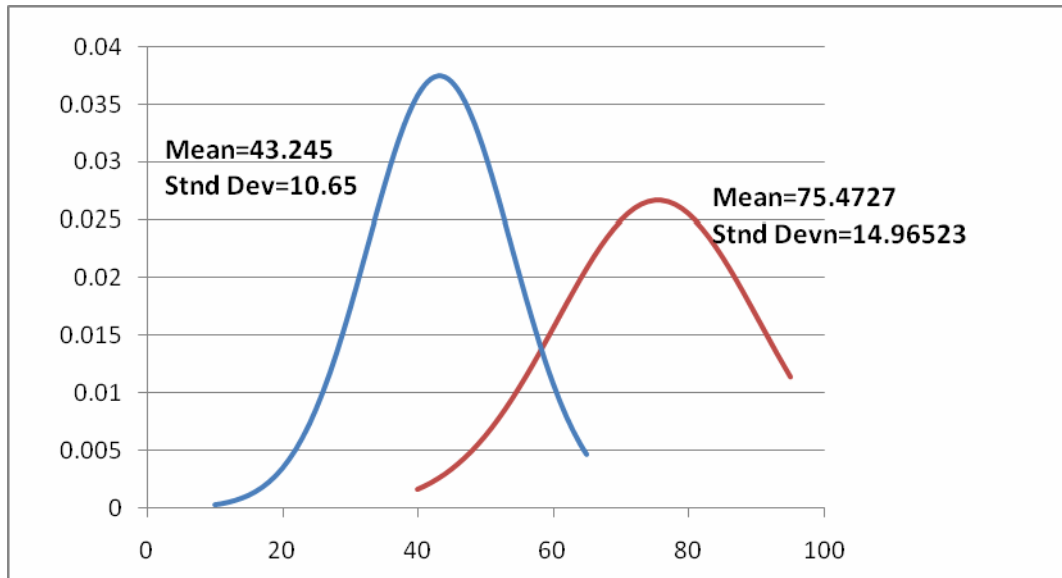


On field availability of field staff has improved remarkably as salary cuts are affected to the extent of a day's salary for absence/more than 4 hours of delay in reporting at the centre. Attendance registered at the centres as well as details of applications received, stage of processing and disposals per centre are transmitted from these centres real time via a broadband link and compiled at the district headquarters where the District Collector personally monitors the field activity with Janmitra centres as his eyes. Daily

monitoring and availability of full and accurate information with the departmental heads and the District Collector, who in particular, keeps a close eye on defaulting employees and delayed disposals immensely facilitating the process of monitoring and performance evaluation of departments as well as individual employees. The IITM study has found the following factors that have most influenced the rural perceptions about Janmitra.



The impact has been quite evident in the form of less crowded district offices as the rural population now has a delivery interface much closer to their lives and essentially intertwined as a part of their day-to-day existence. The accessibility, availability and efficacy of governmental service delivery mechanisms has significantly improved for the rural population in Gwalior and the same has been verified in an independent impact assessment study of the project undertaken by Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management. The IITM study has used the Z-Test to bring out the statistical significance of the difference found between the earlier business as usual scenario and the responses post Janmitra. It concludes that there exists ‘a significant difference in the two means which strengthens the premise that Janmitra centres have been efficiently and effectively performing, much better than the previous delivery system’. The previous system gave a z test statistical mean of 43.245 while post Janmitra, the mean jumped to 75.4727.



The most patent impact of the initiative has been on the accessibility and effectiveness of the delivery mechanisms for the rural poor. The far-flung rural hinterlands of the district are today flush with on field activity-with field functionaries like health workers, doctors, school teachers, extension officers, Anganwadi workers attending to their field of responsibility daily under effective top level monitoring through the instrumentality of the Janmitra centre. Sub Health Centres (SHCs), the basic health care unit in a village, had till sometime back, the dubious and unenviable reputation of opening only during inspections of district officers in the village.

Today daily attendance of each sub health centre, each school in every village in the 310 Panchayats in Gwalior is being personally monitored by the District Collector as the field staff can now be found serving at the SHCs. Such is the rush of activity at the Janmitra centre in a village that rural citizens in the district now call it the 'Mini Collectorate'.

While prompt follow up and intensive monitoring at the initial stage followed by 'monitoring by exception' now has been vital to the success of the initiative, the roles being played by the centre coordinators as well as the computer operators have been unparalleled. Their contribution at all stages of the project implementation has been crucial to the success of the project.

The innovations sought to be implemented through Janmitra are novel, experience based and grounded in field realities. As the systems so established get well entrenched;

incremental innovations are being effected to improve the utility and value of the Janmitra Kendra to the life of an ordinary citizen.

The Plan Ahead: Convergence with the Common Service Centres under NeGP

The District Collector now envisages dovetailing the project within the broad framework of NeGP's Common Service Centres. The task of identifying Village Level Entrepreneurs is underway and the plan now is to gradually hand over the Janmitra centres to these local entrepreneurs who will add other value added services as envisioned in NeGP to the existing basket of services. A revenue model is being worked out so as to ensure remunerative business for the VLE while keeping the main objectives of the programme intact. Terms and conditions of engagement with the VLEs have been drawn up and it is planned that the first of such centres will commence operations by the end of August. In this model, while the hardware and other infrastructure costs will have to be put in by the VLE, the revenue model will ensure 100% recovery of initial investment by the second year for the VLE and profits thereafter. Thus while in the beginning, funds for setting up the centres had been provided by local resources and the Rural Development Department, with this model in place, the net cost to the exchequer would be reduced to zero along with the desirable spillovers of nurturing a strong base of local entrepreneurs providing highly valuable services to the rural citizens.